What is claimed is:

1. A method for preventing or treating a subject having nephropathy comprising: administering to an individual in need of such treatment an effective amount of a compound which is an incretin, a GLP-1, an exendin, binds to a receptor for glucagon-like peptide-1, or a biologically active agonist, analog, derivative, variant, or fragment of any of them.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the glucagon-like peptide-1 is GLP-1 or a biologically active analog, derivative, variant, or fragment thereof.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the exendin is exendin-3, exendin-4, or a biologically active analog, derivative, variant, or fragment thereof.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the composition is administered in a dose of from about 0.001 pmol/kg to 20 nmol/kg.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the composition is administered in a dose of from about 0.001 μg/kg/dose to about 1.0 μg/kg/dose.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the composition is administered in a dose sufficient to achieve a therapeutic plasma level of at least 40 pg/ml.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the compound is administered parenterally.

8. The method of claim 4 wherein the compound is administered intravenously in a dose of from about 0.1 pmol/kg/min. up to about 10 pmol/kg/min.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein the compound is administered subcutaneously in a dose of from about 0.1 pmol/kg/min to 75 pmol/kg/min.

10. A method for preventing progression to ESRD in a subject having nephropathy comprising administering to an individual in need of such treatment an effective amount of a compound which is an incretin, a GLP-1, an exendin, binds to a receptor for glucagon-like peptide-1, or a biologically active agonist, analog, derivative, variant, or fragment of any of them.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein the glucagon-like peptide-1 is GLP-1 or a biologically active analog, derivative, variant, or fragment thereof.

12. The method of claim 10 wherein the exendin is exendin-3, exendin-4, or a biologically active analog, derivative, variant, or fragment thereof.

13. The method of claim 10 wherein the composition is administered in a dose of from about 0.001 pmol/kg to 20 nmol/kg.

14. The method of claim 10 wherein the composition is administered in a dose of from about 0.001 μg/kg/dose to about 1.0 μg/kg/dose.

15. The method of claim 10 wherein the composition is administered in a dose sufficient to achieve a therapeutic plasma level of at least 40 pg/ml.

16. The method of claim 10 wherein the compound is administered parenterally.

17. The method of claim 13 wherein the compound is administered intravenously in a dose of from about 0.1 pmol/kg/min. up to about 10 pmol/kg/min.

18. The method of claim 1 wherein the compound is administered subcutaneously in a dose of from about 0.1 pmol/kg/min to 75 pmol/kg/min.

19. A method of improving endothelial function in a subject in need thereof comprising administering a compound which is an incretin, a GLP-1, an exendin, binds to a receptor for glucagon-like peptide-1, or a biologically active agonist, analog, derivative, variant, or fragment of any of them.

20. The method of claim 19 wherein the glucagon-like peptide-1 is GLP-1 or a biologically active analog, derivative, variant, or fragment thereof.

21. The method of claim 19 wherein the exendin is exendin-3, exendin-4, or a biologically active analog, derivative, variant, or fragment thereof.

22. The method of claim 19 wherein the composition is administered in a dose of from about 0.001 pmol/kg to 20 nmol/kg.

23. The method of claim 19 wherein the composition is administered in a dose of from about 0.001 μg/kg/dose to about 1.0 μg/kg/dose.

24. The method of claim 19 wherein the composition is administered in a dose sufficient to achieve a therapeutic plasma level of at least 40 pg/ml.

25. The method of claim 19 wherein the compound is administered parenterally.

26. The method of claim 22 wherein the compound is administered intravenously in a dose of from about 0.1 pmol/kg/min. up to about 10 pmol/kg/min.

27. The method of claim 19 wherein the compound is administered subcutaneously in a dose of from about 0.1 pmol/kg/min to 75 pmol/kg/min.

28. A method for reduce proteinuria in a patient comprising administering to an subject in need of such treatment an effective amount of a compound which is an incretin, a GLP-1, an exendin, binds to a receptor for glucagon-like peptide-1, or a biologically active agonist, analog, derivative, variant, or fragment of any of them.

29. The method of claim 28 wherein the glucagon-like peptide-1 is GLP-1 or a biologically active analog, derivative, variant, or fragment thereof.

30. The method of claim 28 wherein the exendin is exendin-3, exendin-4, or a biologically active analog, derivative, variant, or fragment thereof.

31. The method of claim 28 wherein the composition is administered in a dose of from about 0.001 pmol/kg to 20 nmol/kg.

32. The method of claim 28 wherein the composition is administered in a dose of from about 0.001 μg/kg/dose to about 1.0 μg/kg/dose.

33. The method of claim 28 wherein the composition is administered in a dose sufficient to achieve a therapeutic plasma level of at least 40 pg/ml.

34. The method of claim 28 wherein the compound is administered parenterally.

35. The method of claim 31 wherein the compound is administered intravenously in a dose of from about 0.1 pmol/kg/min. up to about 10 pmol/kg/min.

36. The method of claim 28 wherein the compound is administered subcutaneously in a dose of from about 0.1 pmol/kg/min to 75 pmol/kg/min.

37. A method for preventing or slowing progression of glomerulosclerosis in a subject comprising administering to an individual in need of such treatment an effective amount of a compound which is an incretin, a GLP-1, an exendin, binds to a receptor for glucagon-like peptide-1, or a biologically active agonist, analog, derivative, variant, or fragment of any of them.

38. The method of claim 37 wherein the glucagon-like peptide-1 is GLP-1 or a biologically active analog, derivative, variant, or fragment thereof.

39. The method of claim 37 wherein the exendin is exendin-3, exendin-4, or a biologically active analog, derivative, variant, or fragment thereof.

40. The method of claim 37 wherein the composition is administered in a dose of from about 0.001 pmol/kg to 20 nmol/kg.

41. The method of claim 37 wherein the composition is administered in a dose of from about 0.001 μg/kg/dose to about 1.0 μg/kg/dose.

42. The method of claim 37 wherein the composition is administered in a dose sufficient to achieve a therapeutic plasma level of at least 40 pg/ml.

43. The method of claim 37 wherein the compound is administered parenterally.

44. The method of claim 40 wherein the compound is administered intravenously in a dose of from about 0.1 pmol/kg/min. up to about 10 pmol/kg/min.

45. The method of claim 37 wherein the compound is administered subcutaneously in a dose of from about 0.1 pmol/kg/min to 75 pmol/kg/min.

46. The method of claim 1 wherein the nephropathy is caused by diabetes, insulin resistance, or hypertension.